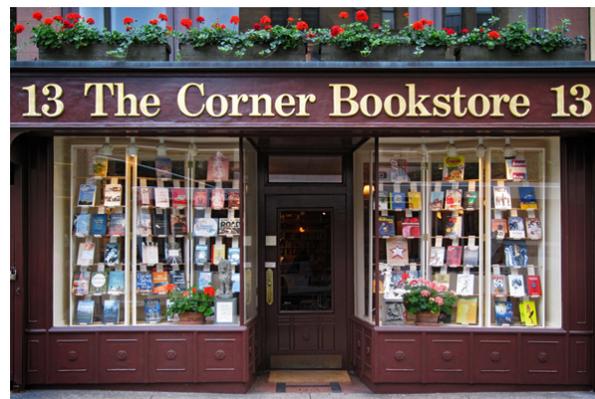


HOW TO A HAVE A PRODUCTIVE INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE VISIT

By a former independent bookseller & Mountaineers Books staff member

Independent bookstores are unique hubs for community, ideas, and information. The readers who work there (because bookstore staff are all first and foremost readers) provide an exceptional and personal level of service in their work as booksellers. They often labor long hours into the evening and on weekends. When you stop by an independent bookstore, if there is not a long line forming at the checkout counter or info desk, stop by to introduce yourself and meet a bookseller. Why? Because booksellers want to connect with authors. They are curious about the people behind the books that they read and sell, and they are in a position to recommend your book to customers. Read on for advice on how to have a productive bookstore visit.

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Booksellers help customers find books every day. On a few occasions, after assisting a customer locate a particular book within the store, the customer turned to me and said, "I wrote this book." I then realized that I had been assisting an author locate their own book and on those occasions, I felt a little ambushed. The author was proud and happy to have the book in hand, but I felt like I had passed a test I didn't know I was taking. I always wondered what the author would have said if I couldn't find their book. He or she might walk away upset or disappointed. As an author, if you are direct and honest up front it will help you build relationships with booksellers. They'll be more likely to remember you and your book with warmth and enthusiasm.

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So don't be shy about introducing yourself. It's a beautiful thing to be a member of the larger book community.